

WATERLOO | ENVIRONMENT

Environment Teaching Fellow

SECOND REPORT TO THE FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENT GENERAL ASSEMBLY: MAY 4, 2015
(COVERING ACTIVITY PERIOD SEPTEMBER 2014-2015)

Long-term objective: The Faculty of Environment will be known on campus and externally for its innovative approach to integrative, experiential teaching/learning and research. The primary mandate of the Teaching Fellow is to assist instructors and professors to be most effective as teachers.

The Faculty of Environment's Teaching Learning Committee ENV-TLC met monthly on the first Friday of every month from Sept-March. Membership: ML McAllister (ENV Teaching Fellow), S Anderson (ENV/CTE Liaison), M Groulx (PhD student, School of Planning; Teaching and Learning Associate), Doberstein (GEM), L Johnson (PLANNING), J Lynes /G. Diaz (SEED), Vanessa Schweizer (CKI), MC Brisbois (PhD student, ERS), D Armitage (ERS), Aidan Turley (UG student SEED) Nicole Yang (UG student, School of Planning). The TLC serve as representatives of the faculty departments/schools, instructors and students, with respect to matters related to teaching enhancement.

The TLC advises the Teaching Fellow and collectively develops and encourages initiatives that foster a community of practice around teaching. During the meetings of 2015-15 discussions (with invited guests) included such topics as student success, piloting the use of e-portfolios, universal classroom design and accessibility, Tutorial Assistant training, peer-mentoring programs and enhancing the teaching/learning environment with international students. These discussions results in a number of action items some of which follow.

Proposed ENV TEACHING AWARDS: These faculty-level teaching awards have been designed and circulated for comment to all units. They are ready to implement Fall 2015. Stipend of \$1000 has been approved by the Dean's Office for the ENV Teaching Award recipients, which is to be used to support teaching related activities. In addition, award recipients will have their photo profiled on the Faculty and GreenTEA websites. In addition, the TLC will procure an appropriate 'trophy' that is to be engraved and given to award recipients along with their stipend and an award certificate. **(see Attachment)**

ENVigorate, held on March 27th, was the inaugural, highly successful, student-run and organized grassroots Faculty of Environment spring festival. For details of the festival see envigorate.ca Registration reached 218 participants with 168 people crowding into the courtyard for the kick-off event.

T Training Sessions: During September 2014 over a period of three weeks, ENV ran its first hands-on TA training sessions organized by M. Groulx and S. Anderson in partnership with the

Centre for Teaching Excellence. Two training workshops were offered: “Effective Grading and Feedback” (86 registered, 61 attended) and “Facilitating Effective Discussions” (80 registered, 70 attended). Feedback from students showed strong support for the training, as students rated both sessions approximately a 3.5/4.0 in terms of helpfulness.

Fall GreenTEA Seminar November 14, 2014: “**Deep Thinking And Learning: Sustainability Begins With Oneself**” (S. Singh, D. Armitage, J. Lynes) approximately 30 participants. For more details, please see <http://greentea.uwaterloo.ca/green-tea-news/>.

Winter GreenTEA Seminar February 9, 2015: “**The World is Our Classroom**” about Field trips and Field courses with Drs. Collin Yates (Huntsville Summit Centre) and Amanda Hooykaas– GreenTEA Instructors’ Luncheon approximately 25 participants
<http://greentea.uwaterloo.ca/greentea-news-january-2015/>

New Instructor Workshops: Two events were led by ML McAllister and S. Anderson at the beginning of September and the end of December. The September 2 event was particularly well attended and received and seemed to fill an important information gap for new instructors. At these workshops, the ENV unofficial instructors’ handbook is distributed, and basic suggestions are offered including how to handle the first day of class, how to work effectively with TAs, how to handle various teaching issues, as well as advice on curriculum development and delivery.

Advising and Mentoring: The TF (along with the CTE liaison) also met regularly with new and seasoned instructors to assist with their individual teaching concerns and to discuss topics from classroom management questions to curriculum development.

DOCUMENTS AND SURVEYS UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE TEACHING FELLOW:

Guidelines for Peer Evaluation for Purposes of Tenure and Promotion Passed by Faculty Council (See <https://uwaterloo.ca/environment/faculty-staff/policies-procedures/peer-evaluation-purposes-tenure-and-promotion>)

GreenTEA website with regular teaching updates and profiles on faculty teachers <http://env-blogs.uwaterloo.ca/green-tea/> offers resources that enhance teaching and to showcase teaching. (maintained by M. Groulx). Records, minutes and reports maintained on Learn website



ENV Undergraduate survey on teaching in the faculty: What constitutes teaching excellence in a professor/course? (survey completed; results distributed (see <http://greentea.uwaterloo.ca/reports-on-student-learning/>)

ENV Faculty survey underway evaluating the role of Teaching Fellow and Teaching Learning Committee (Fall 2014). Results to be tabulated and analyzed spring term 2015.

Teaching Fellow University-level Activities: Monthly meetings with University Teaching Fellows chaired by AVP Mario Coniglio; On-going consultation with the CTE to coordinate efforts and to garner advice on teaching-related matters and policies; attendance at various CTE sponsored workshops and events.

Reporting: The Teaching Fellow regularly consults with, and reports to, senior ENV administrators including the Dean and Assoc. Deans.

ENV Teaching Excellence Awards - Draft Framework

(drafted by Mark Groulx)

1.0 Justification for an ENV Teaching Excellence Award Process

The University of Waterloo's Faculty of Environment is recognized as a leader in education. Our instructors' commitment to excellence in the classroom has garnered awards that are both internal and external to the University. As a Faculty, we take great pride in such external recognition. At the same time, we appreciate the unique nature of environmental education, and the value of acknowledging our accomplishments within the context of our own distinct pedagogical needs and teaching style.

Likewise, while ENV faculty members have received external teaching awards, they often have to compete for such awards against contemporaries who possess a greater number of teaching accolades that are attained through Faculty (or department) level award processes. Accordingly, an internal ENV teaching award process will improve our faculty members' standing within award nomination and adjudication procedures that are external to the ENV Faculty and the University as a whole.

The following proposal capitalizes on a significant opportunity and the collective knowledge of our Teaching and Learning Committee by outlining a framework for an ENV Teaching Excellence Award (ENV TEA) process. This framework reflects our Faculty's confidence in our students by proposing a traditional award nomination process (i.e. nomination by peers) as well as a teaching award category where nomination is driven completely by the ENV student body.

1.1 Vision for an ENV Teaching Excellence Award Process

The ENV TEA process recognizes that learning happens both in and outside of the class, and that environmental education shapes and is shaped by shifts in the way we communicate in society. By fostering mentorship, promoting innovation in teaching, and building connections that go beyond the classroom, ENV TEA award recipients embody the very best in our Faculty's commitment to teaching excellence.

1.2 Tenure, Horizon and Timeline

Consistent with the University's Distinguished Teacher Award (DTA) process, both categories in the ENV TEA process are open to any instructor within the Faculty of Environment. As such, the nomination procedures do not explicitly require an extended history of teaching within the Faculty. The adjudication processes outlined below do, however, examine evidence of teaching excellence extending back three years, and thus may implicitly favor candidates with an established teaching history.

The Teaching and Learning Committee recognizes that the ENV TEA process cannot be used to explicitly direct nominations to the University DTA process. That said, ENV TEA recipients are expected to be strong candidates for DTA nomination, and conversely an ENV TEA award may bolster a faculty member's standing within the DTA nomination and/or adjudication process. Accordingly, the proposed timeline for the ENV TEA process reflects the strategic benefit in selecting the ENV TEA recipients for a given year in advance of the DTA nomination period.

Activity	Date
Call for ENV TEA nominations	September Week 4
Promotion of the ENV TEA process	October Week 1 & 2
ENV TEA nomination deadline	October Week 4
ENV TEA Adjudication	November Week 1, 2, 3 & 4
Announcement of the ENV TEA recipients	December Week 1
Support letters for DTA process submitted (if applicable)	January Week 1, 2 & 3
University DTA nomination deadline	February Week 1

2.0 Nomination Processes

The overall ENV TEA nomination process includes separate nomination pathways for two distinct ENV TEA categories. The **ENV TEA: Student Choice Award** will showcase our Faculty's commitment to grassroots decision-making and will distinguish itself by having a nomination process that is entirely student driven. At the same time, it is important to recognize that in their relatively short tenure in our Faculty (typically four years or less), students may not gain a full appreciation for the efforts that instructors put in behind the scenes to foster excellence in the classroom. Within this short window students may also lack the opportunity to witness the evolution of an instructor's teaching philosophy or prowess. Accordingly, nominations for a second **ENV TEA: Faculty and Staff Award** will be made by faculty members and/or staff who recognize excellent teaching from this distinct perspective. As the two nomination processes will be initiated from distinct groups within the Faculty, faculty members and instructors are eligible to be nominated for both awards in the same year. Recommendations for these nomination processes are listed below.

2.1 ENV TEA Nominations: Student Choice Award

To ensure the goal of creating a student driven nomination process does not become a barrier to a robust nomination process, the Teaching and Learning Committee recommends that...

- a minimum of 8 letters of support be provided by current students in the Faculty of Environment.
 - **Justification:** *Provides current evidence of nominee's excellence in teaching*
- up to 2 letters of support be provided by alumni of the Faculty of Environment.
 - **Justification:** *Provides evidence of lasting impact of the nominee's teaching*
- no letters of support be provided by faculty members, instructors or other university support staff.
 - **Justification:** *Ensures the nomination process remains student-driven*
- ¹the Teaching and Learning Committee becomes an active promoter of the ENV TEA process during the nomination period.

- **Justification:** Ensures students are aware of the opportunity to put forward a nomination and of the steps in the nomination process
- students wishing to put forward a nominee be able to contact their department's Teaching and Learning Committee member for assistance with the nomination process.
 - **Justification:** Eases the burden on students and helps to identify potential letters of support (particularly alumni) while keeping the nominee at arms length from the process
- members of the Teaching and Learning Committee be ineligible for nomination.
 - **Justification:** Prevents any conflict of interest in the nomination and/or adjudication process
- a previous ENV TEA: Student Choice Award winner be ineligible for future nomination in this category.
 - **Justification:** provides the opportunity for others to be recognized for excellence in teaching

2.2 ENV TEA Nominations: Faculty and Staff Award

To meet the goal of recognizing excellence in teaching at a peer level within ENV, the Teaching and Learning Committee recommends that...

- a minimum of 4 letters of support be provided by faculty members and/or staff within the Faculty of Environment.
 - **Justification:** Provides broad evidence of nominee's excellence in teaching
- one of the 4 letters of support noted above be provided by the chair of the nominee's department.
 - **Justification:** Provides evidence of department support for a nomination
- one of the 4 letters of support noted above be provided by a faculty or staff member from outside the nominee's department.
 - **Justification:** Provides evidence that teaching impact extends throughout the Faculty
- ¹the Teaching and Learning Committee becomes an active promoter of the ENV TEA process during the nomination period.
 - **Justification:** Ensures faculty and staff are aware of the opportunity to put forward a nomination and of the steps in the nomination process
- members of the Teaching and Learning Committee be ineligible for nomination.
 - **Justification:** Prevents any conflict of interest in the nomination and/or adjudication process
- a previous ENV TEA: Faculty and Staff Award winner be ineligible for future nomination in this category.

- **Justification:** allows for the opportunity for others to be recognized for excellence in teaching

3.0 Adjudication Committee and Process

Separate committees will oversee the adjudication of each ENV TEA category. The adjudication committee for the **Student Choice Award** will be comprised of seven members, including: one representative from each of the Faculty's five departments; one undergraduate student representative from the Environment Student Society; and one graduate student representative from either the Association of Graduate Planners or the Environment Graduate Student Association. The adjudication committee for the **Faculty and Staff Award** will be comprised of six members, including: the chair of each department; and one representative of the Dean's office.

Teaching and Learning Committee members will not be eligible to sit on the **Student Choice Award** adjudication committee, but will be responsible for identifying an adjudicator from within their department; preferably a senior faculty member with a strong teaching history. Since Teaching and Learning Committee members may be called upon to facilitate student efforts in the nomination process, this distinction will limit any potential conflict of interest that could arise. Selecting a separate adjudication committee will also ease the overall burden of membership on the Teaching and Learning Committee.

In an instance where a chair is a sitting member of the Teaching and Learning Committee they may still serve as a member of the **Faculty and Staff Award** adjudication committee. They retain the right, however, to appoint a faculty member from their department to take their place on the committee, so long as this individual is not already an adjudicator on the Student Choice Distinction committee.

Student, staff and/or faculty members leading a nomination will compile evidence in support of their nominees with the assistance of their department's Teaching and Learning Committee member (where needed). Sources of evidence will include:

- Letters of support collected during the nomination process
- Syllabi for courses taught within the last 3 years
- External teaching awards received within the last 3 years
- A list of student-centred extra-curricular efforts of the faculty member, e.g. regular attendance at student-faculty events or helping to organize such events.
- Evidence of previous teaching award nominations

Each adjudication committee member will receive complete nomination packages for their award category no later than the first week in November. Adjudicators will have three weeks to review nomination packages on an individual basis and to develop an initial ranking of candidates. Each adjudication committee will meet separately for two hours during the last week of November to share initial rankings and select the ENV TEA recipients. Initial rankings will be used solely as a guide, and the final decision will be arrived at via consensus. During their

individual ranking and group deliberations, adjudication committee members will give equal weight to the following criteria:

- *The nominee promotes experiential learning through the design of her or his course and course assignments.*
- *The nominee illustrates evidence of innovative teaching that supports varied learning styles and fosters student engagement.*
- *The nominee shows a commitment to mentorship beyond that classroom that has demonstrated positive impacts on the personal and/or professional growth his or her students, both graduate and undergraduate (where applicable)*
- *The nominee demonstrates a commitment to his or her personal growth and development as an educator.*

3.1 Announcement of the ENV Teaching Excellence Awards

The ENV Teaching Excellence Awards will be presented by the Teaching Fellow (Faculty and Staff Award) and a representative of the Environment Students Society (Student Choice Award) in the first week of December. Once awarded, faculty, instructors, university support staff and students will be encouraged to provide letters of support to complete each ENV TEA recipient's nominations in the University DTA process where applicable (i.e. Faculty members provide letters for the Student Choice Award recipient). As this stage involves nomination to the University level DTA process, the TLC will no longer hold responsibility for promoting or providing support for the organization of the nomination process.

NOTES

1. A short guide will be produced that outlines the ENV TEA process, including steps in putting forward a nominee.